The history of Fort Winnebago /

Fort Winnebago in 1834. Reduced photographic facsimile of oil painting made by Ira A. Ridgeway, of Portage, in 1896, based with great care on contemporary plans, and recollections of early settlers. The view is from the southwest. The building to the right of the gate is the guardhouse; to the left, the armory. On the opposite side of the square. to the left, were the officers' quarters. The peaked-roof building at the left corner was a blockhouse, and a similar structure was in the corner diagonally opposite. The magazine appears in the corner adjacent to the guardhouse, and at the side of it to the right were soldiers' quarters. The chapel was in the corner diagonally opposite the magazine, but is not visible; as is also the case with some of the other smaller buildings. The log building near the end of the bridge over the river, to the right, was Henry Merrell's sutler's store. The low structure a little to the east of it, was the ice cellar. A little farther along was the surgeon's headquarters (a portion of which is still standing), and a little to the right of it was the hospital. In the distance, looking between the hospital and surgeon's quarters, may be seen the old stone bakery; the blacksmith shop and the carpenter shop were close by, but do not appear on the painting. At the left of the bridge is a commissary building, which is still standing; just in the rear of it was Jones's sutler's store, a portion of which only is discernible. Just beyond the fort, to the left (out of the above picture), was a log theatre. Still farther to the left, on an eminence, was the Indian Agency building.

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THE HISTORY OF FORT WINNEBAGO. BY ANDREW JACKSON TURNER.

To the present generation, old Fort Winnebago (at Portage) is a tradition. To the older citizens of our State, who recall its whitened walls as they appeared above the stockade that inclosed them, and who retain a vivid recollection of many of its appointments and environments, it is a reminiscence; very few there are, now living, who dwelt in the fort from its first occupancy, and who had an acquaintance with those of its garrison who were

subsequently illustrious in military and civil life. Of such, some passed their earlier years at the fort in comparative obscurity, awaiting an opportunity to prove their mettle on the sanguinary field of conflict, but these afterward left their impress on the pages of history. Some of their names are still spoken; others who were here, of equal merit, are rarely or never mentioned, for the opportunity came not to them. Much that occurred here has been recorded in various public documents, volumes and papers, but nowhere, I believe, has it all been arranged in a convenient form. So the old fort may be said to have had a history, but no historian. It is not my purpose to attempt an exhaustive history of the fort; but rather to collate what has already been written, but which is so scattered as to involve great research on the part of the student Who desires to know as much as possible of its origin and history. I have incorporated in my account some things not found in any published matter, which I have heard related from the lips of those who were there as early as 1830, and who knew its 5 66 innermost history. Some of it is of a minor character, but may possess sufficient local interest to warrant the recital.

Although the existence of the lead mines in Southwestern Wisconsin had been known for many years, it was not until about 1822 that they attracted general attention, when adventurers began coming in and commenced mining operations The Indian title to the lands in that section had not yet been extinguished, or was in dispute; and in any event the Indians Were authorized to remain upon them “as long as the lands which are now ceded to the United States remain their property.” The lands had not been brought into market and were not even surveyed. Nevertheless “permits” to enter upon the lands claimed by the Indians were issued by certain government officials. This naturally irritated the savages whose lands had been invaded The conduct of the adventurers toward the aborigines was frequently coarse and brutal, and disturbances were the inevitable result. In them we find the inciting causes that led to the establishment of old Fort Winnebago—so called because the lead region, as well as the Fox-Wisconsin portage, was in the territory of the Winnebagoes.

In 1827, Joseph M. Street, the Indian agent at Prairie du Chien, wrote to Governor Edwards of Illinois: “The Winnebagoes complained of the trespass of the miners, and the open violation of the treaty by the permits of Mr. Thomas, the agent. No notice was taken of it, and the diggings progressed. The Indians attempted force, which was repelled, and very angry feelings produced.”

Col. Thomas L. McKenney, an officer in the regular army, who was superintendent of the Indian trade, also recorded his impressions of the condition of affairs in the lead regions, in this language: “The Winnebagoes were in a state of great excitement, caused by the intrusions of the whites on their lands. They had, after having remonstrated for a long time in vain, made up their minds to endure it no longer, and had so informed Mr. Courier, the sub-agent. A warning was circulated among the miners, who replied:

‘ We have a right to go just where we please.’ Everything appeared threatening. Two thousand persons were said to be over the line, as intruders upon lands belonging to the Indians. The Indians had fallen back, and sent word to the sub-agent that they would see them no more—meaning, as friends. This overt act, this trespass upon their grounds, was the egg out of which the Black Hawk War was hatched. There was no necessity for that war, when, some four years after, it did break out.”

For a time prior to 1826, Fort Crawford, at Prairie du Chien, had been occupied by a detachment of United States troops. In October of that year they were ordered to Fort Snelling. When they left they took with them two Winnebagoes who had been confined in the guardhouse for some supposed offense of a trivial nature. The following spring a rumor was in circulation, and generally believed, that the two Indians had been turned over to the Chippewas, their enemies, to run the gauntlet through a party of the latter tribe, armed With clubs and tomahawks, and that the race for life had resulted in the killing of both of them. Something like this occurred with reference to some Sioux prisoners at Fort Snelling, but the story had no truth as applied to the Winnebago captives. The

report had its origin in the murdering of some Chippewas by a party of Sioux. Five of these Sioux were turned over to the United States forces at Fort Snelling to be dealt with by the Chippewas according to the aboriginal custom, and it was determined that they should run the gauntlet: the Chippewas being armed with rifles, instead of tomahawks and clubs, as stated in Smith's *History of Wisconsin* and some other accounts. The whole affair is graphically described by Mrs. Van Cleve,1 who was an eye-witness of the

1 Mrs. Charlotte Ouisconsin Van Cleve was born in Fort Crawford, July 1, 1819, and is said to have been the first white child born within the limits of Wisconsin. She is still living at Minneapolis, Minn. Her book of reminiscences, *Three Score Years and Ten* (Minneapolis, 1895), is an interesting publication, ranking with Mrs. Kinzie's *Wau-Bun*, Folsom's *Fifty Years in the Northwest*, etc. Her description of the Chippewa gauntlet, alluded to above, is on pp. 74 et seq.

68 affair, in her little volume, *Three Score Years and Ten* . All of the Sioux were killed before reaching the goal.

Notwithstanding the falsity of the report, so far as it related to the Winnebagoes in confinement, it had its natural effect upon the disposition of our Indians, whose only creed is a life for a life; and it should not occasion surprise that it provoked retaliation and served to increase the difficulties which are the inevitable accompaniment of an advancing civilization. The whites, on the one hand, entertained nothing but contempt for “blanket Indians,” strangely misjudged their disposition, and treated them as legitimate objects of plunder; the aborigines, on the other, sought to protect themselves in the only manner known to them, by taking revenge for imaginary or real wrongs, often committing excesses and cruelties in keeping with their savage nature.

And so we read at the present day, with horror, of the murders of the family of Methode, at Prairie du Chien, in 1827; of Rigeste Gagnier, and the scalping of his infant daughter by a noted Indian chief, Red Bird, and his accomplices of the Winoshic band. Of Red Bird and his subsequent sequent dramatic surrender and death, I will speak further on.

As a component part of a general attack upon the whites, which doubtless had been planned, the keel-boat “Oliver H. Perry,” returning from a trip to Fort Snelling with provisions for the troops at that station, was attacked by a band of Winnebagoes off the mouth of the Bad Ax, and a severe battle ensued, with a number of casualties on both sides.

He who reads Reynolds's *Life and Times* will find other explanations for the attack upon this boat, which would have justified almost any conduct upon the part of the Indians but it is not my present purpose to attempt to locate the largest measure of blame for what was occurring. The idea will suggest itself, however, from the report of Maj.-Gen. Alexander Macomb (general-in-chief of the army) to the secretary of war the following year, stating that “from 69 the restlessness evinced by the Winnebagoes and other tribes in the Northwest, partly arising from intrusion upon land in the mineral district claimed by them to be within their boundaries, by white people, etc.,” he had found it necessary to establish a new military post at the Fox-Wisconsin portage; that due regard was not being given to the rights of the real owners of the soil, and that the whites were not wholly blameless in these matters. However this may be, it had become apparent that an increased military force was necessary in this section. These occurrences have been referred to in historical works as the Winnebago “outbreaks,” “disturbances,” etc., and sometimes they are dignified as the Winnebago War.

Moses M. Strong, in his *History of the Territory of Wisconsin* , observes: “It may be thought that the results of this war are very meager for the amount of force employed in it. If measured by the amount of blood shed after the murders at Prairie du Chien and on the keel-boat, the criticism is very correct. But if it be intended to suggest that there was no sufficient reason for apprehending that the Winnebagoes contemplated a general uprising against and a massacre of the whites, the thought and suggestion are the result of great ignorance of the intentions of the Winnebagoes and of the facts in the case. There is satisfactory evidence that the Pottawattomies were allied with the Winnebagoes, and that

they were to fall upon and destroy the settlement at Chicago, and it is probable that but for the movements resulting from the efforts of General Cass, who was fortunately near the seat of war, the whole country would have been overrun with a general Indian outbreak."

It may be that this was an exaggerated view of what the Indians contemplated; but it appears clearly that there was abundant reason why General Macomb, in his report to the secretary of war in November, 1828, should have thought it necessary to establish a military post at the portage, which opinion was communicated to the secretary in the 70 following language: "From the restlessness evinced by the Winnebagoes and other tribes in the Northwest, partly arising from intrusion upon land in the mineral district claimed by them to be within their boundaries, by white people in search of lead; and in consequence of a belief entertained by these tribes, from the smallness of the military force in their neighborhood, in comparison with what it had been several years before, the government might not find it convenient to increase it, and they might therefore with impunity resume the depredations which had led to the establishment of those posts in the first instance; there. fore it was found necessary to establish a new post at the portage between the Fox and Ouisconsin rivers and reoccupy Chicago. * * * In order to effect these changes, the first regiment furnished the garrison of the post at the portage of the Ouisconsin and Fox rivers, while it continued to occupy fort Crawford, at the Prairie du Chien, and fort Snelling, at the junction of the St. Peters with the Mississippi. The second regiment, which heretofore occupied the posts at the Sault de St. Marie, Green Bay, and Mackinac, moved down to occupy the posts of forts Gratiot and Niagara, the residue of the regiment being at Houlton Plantations. The fifth regiment, which was stationed with the sixth at the school of instruction at Jefferson barracks, relieved the second at Green Bay, Sault de St. Marie, and Mackinac, besides furnishing two companies for the garrison at Chicago. The march of the fifth regiment by the way of Ouisconsin and Fox rivers must have produced an imposing effect on the tribes of Indians through whose country it passed; an effect which was contemplated by the movement. It will be seen by the accompanying map of the distribution of the troops that there is a complete cordon from Green bay to the Mississippi,

which must have a powerful influence over the Winnebagoes, and afforded protection to the Indian trade which passes in direction; and there is every reason to believe that neither the Winnebagoes nor their confederates will attempt any 71 hostilities so long as the troops maintain their present positions."1

1 As supplementary to and confirming General Macomb's report, the following extract is taken from the annual report of Peter B. Porter, secretary of war, November 24, 1828: "In the course of the last year the Winnebagoes and other Indian tribes living in the neighborhood of the posts which had been evacuated—emboldened probably by that circumstance stance—commenced a series of petty, but savage, warfare on the adjoining white population, and rendered it necessary to march a strong military force into the country, the effect of which was to quell, for a time at least, these disturbances. But in the course of the past spring and summer fresh symptoms of discontent and hostility were manifested by the Indians; and the people of Illinois, and more particularly the inhabitants of the lead mine district, became again so much alarmed as to suggest the necessity, not only of permanently garrisoning the former military post of Chicago and Prairie du Chien, but of establishing a new one in the center of the Winnebago country, for the purpose of watching the movements of the Indians, and to serve as a connecting link between the chains of fortifications on the Mississippi and on the lakes." See *Senate Docs*., No. 1, 20th Cong., 2d sess., vol. i, pp. 17, 18, 26.— Ed.

Executing the order of the secretary of war, the adjutant-general of the United States, under the direction of General Macomb, issued "Order 44," under date of August 19, 1828, which directed:

"The three companies of the First regiment of infantry, now at Fort Howard, to proceed forthwith under the command of Major Twiggs of that regiment to the portage between the Fox and Ouisconsin rivers, there to select a position and establish a military post.

"By command of Maj.-Gen. Macomb.

“R. Jones , Adjt.-Gen.”

An additional reason for the establishment of the fort is given in the *History of Columbia County* , not referred to in the official reports, which may contain many grains of truth: “There was necessity for some means of protection to the fur trade from Winnebago exactions; * * * the general government at the solicitation of John Jacob Astor, who was then at the head of the American Fur company and upon whose goods the Indians levied exorbitant tolls, authorized the erection of a post at portage”.

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It is true that the company had a post there, and it may be that heavy tolls were exacted; it is quite as likely, however, that with all the tolls that may have been exacted the Indians were getting the worst of it, for it is not recorded, as far as I know, that that gigantic monopoly ever suffered many losses in their trades with the Indians.

September 7 following, Maj. David E. Twiggs reported his arrival at the fort which was to be established, as follows:1

1 Morgan L. Martin, in *Wis. Hist. Colls*., xi, p. 399, speaks of having met Maj. Twiggs at Butte des Morts, with three companies of soldiers in boats on their way to establish the garrison at Fort Winnebago. Jefferson Davis, just graduated at West Point, was one of his lieutenants.

“ Fort Winnebago , September 7, 1828.

“ Sir : I have the honor of reporting my arrival at the fort with my command this day. I have selected a position for the fort on the right bank of the Fox river, immediately opposite the portage. The Indians, I am told, are very much dissatisfied with the location of troops here; as yet I have not been able to see any of the chiefs, consequently cannot say with any certainty what their dispositions are.

“Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

“D. E. TWIGGS,

“Major First Infantry.”

The site selected for the fort was occupied by Francis le Roy, but satisfactory terms were made with him for its occupancy by the government. Macomb's request to have the lands selected for the fort withdrawn from market, was made January 10, 1835, and was approved by President Jackson, February 9 of the same year.

Twiggs reported December 29, 1828, what had been done in the matter of temporary buildings, for the shelter of his command, prior to the construction of the fort buildings proper; the report is here given in full:

“ Fort Winnebago , 29 December, 1828.

“ General : I have not received any instructions relative to the construction of the permanent garrison at this place. 73 After completing the temporary buildings I commenced procuring materials for the quarters, etc., and soon will have square timber enough for two blockhouses. I have (and will continue through the winter) six saws, sawing flooring, weather boarding and other lumber. We have about twenty thousand feet of all kinds, and hope by spring to have sufficient to complete the buildings. The sash, blinds, etc., Will be ready before the end of February. There will be wanting three or four yoke of oxen, and as many carts, the shingles and lime can better be furnished by contract; all the other materials the command can procure; all the buildings had better be frame—logs cannot be had, and if they could, frame is cheaper and much better; all the timber has to be brought from nine to eleven miles, but if the carts and oxen are furnished, and the lime and shingles got by contract, I can with ease complete the garrison by next November. I

would be pleased to hear from you on the subject as soon as convenient. I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

“D. E. Twiggs ,

“Major First Infantry.

“ *To Gen. A. Atkinson, Commanding* .”

The temporary barracks were constructed of logs obtained. principally on what is known locally as Pine Island, about six miles west of Portage; they were probably a little east of the fort subsequently erected, and resembled the cabins which are always put up in logging camps for the use of the men; but nothing more definite concerning them is now obtainable. It is presumed that the instructions. that Twiggs desired were not long delayed, for we know that active operations for the erection of the fort were soon in progress.

Lieut. Jefferson Davis, later the chieftain of the Confederacy has recorded the fact that he went up the Yellow River, a tributary of the Wisconsin, some fifty miles distant and got out the pine logs to be used in the construction of the fort, which were rafted down in the spring and hauled across the portage with teams and were wrought 74 into proper form with whipsaw, broadax, and adz.1 Lumbermen still point out the foundations of Davis's dam, which was constructed for flooding out his rafts of timber for use in building the fort. Another party was detailed to get out the needed stone, of which a great quantity was used, at Stone Quarry Hill, the place where the most of the stone used in Portage for building purposes, has ever since been obtained. The bricks were manufactured near the present Wisconsin River bridge, at what we know as “Armstrong's brickyard.” Lime was burned by another detail at or near Paquette's farm on the Bellefontaine, one of the best and most widely known farms in the State.2

1 *Jefferson Davis— a Memoir, by his Wife* (N. Y., 1890), vol. i, pp. 80–82. See also, *Wis. Hist. Colls*., viii, p. 310.— Ed.

2 See *Wis. Hist. Colls*., xii, p. 402.— Ed.

An enormous well was sunk in the very center of the square, around which the usual fort buildings were constructed, and it has continued from its never-failing fountain, to contribute to the comfort of the thirsty pilgrim until the present day; but a modern windmill now does the duty that was formerly so tedious and irksome. So all hands were busy. Officers, who in after years became distinguished in the war with Mexico, the Florida and other Indian wars, and the great conflict involving the perpetuity of our Union, planned and wrought with the common soldier in bringing into form the fort and the necessary accompanying buildings. Stables, hospitals, bakeries, blacksmith shops, commissary buildings, ice-cellars (which were filled from Swan Lake), sutlers' stores, magazines, laundries, bathhouses, etc., rapidly sprang into existence. Gardens were also cleared, and old soldiers have recorded the fact that they could not be excelled in the matter of the quantity and quality of the vegetables produced. A theater was erected, and doubtless professional tragedians would have hidden their faces in confusion if they could have witnessed their own best efforts put to shame. A young lieutenant in the regular army, far removed from the confines of civilization, with the officers' wives and their guests, all cultured 75 ladies, for an audience, would undoubtedly do his best when *Macbeth* or some other equally hair-lifting tragedy was on the boards, in the full glare of the pitch-pine fagots blazing from the fireplace in the rear, and shedding their effulgent rays over the brilliant assemblage.

While all this was going on, regular military duty was not neglected, and drills and parades were indulged in of course; the stars and stripes were regularly given to the breeze at the roll of the drum at guard mounting, and lowered with the same accompaniment at retreat; morning and evening guns were sounded, the *reveille* called the soldiers to duty in the gray light of the morning, and “taps” sent them to retirement in the blue twilight of the evening.

In the regular course of military movements, some of the companies first doing duty here were transferred to different posts, and their places were taken by others; and so it happened that many whose names were enrolled on the scroll of fame in after years, were initiated into the science of war at Fort Winnebago. Perhaps the most prominent of them all was Lieut. Jefferson Davis, then subaltern of Capt. William S. Harney. To his honor, be it said, his services at Fort Winnebago were highly creditable. I have heard it remarked by those who knew him here, that he had no liking for the amusements to which officers, as well as private soldiers, resort to relieve the tedium of camp life; but that he was ever engaged, when not in active service, in some commendable occupation. His services in the lumber camps on the Yellow River, and his successful mission in bringing down fleets of lumber through the Dells of the Wisconsin, attest to his faithfulness as a soldier.

Next to Lieutenant Davis, should be mentioned Maj. David E. Twiggs, of the First Infantry, under whose immediate superintendence the fort was constructed, as already stated. Subsequently, Twiggs distinguished himself at the battle of Monterey, in the Mexican War. He was dismissed from the federal service in February, 1861, for surrendering the United States stores in Texas, before that State had seceded, and was a Confederate general for a time.

One of Twiggs's lieutenants here, was Captain Harney, who was brevetted a colonel for meritorious conduct in several engagements with hostile Indians in Florida, and became famous as an Indian fighter; he was also brevetted a brigadier-general for gallant service in the battle of Cerro Gordo. He retired from active service in 1863, and in 1865 was brevetted a major-general for long and faithful service.

Col. William J. Worth—whose gallant services in the War of 1812, and who in the Mexican War disclosed abilities as a soldier which brought him into the public mind as a proper candidate for the presidency — was stationed here for a time.

Capt. E. V. Sumner, who became so renowned for his famous cavalry charge at the battle of Cerro Gordo, in which he was wounded, and who subsequently distinguished himself at Contreras, Churubusco, and Molino del Rey, in Mexico, was also here. Captain Sumner led an expedition against the Cheyenne Indians in Kansas; he commanded the left wing of the federal army at the siege of Yorktowns; was in all of the battles of the Peninsula, and was twice wounded; was again wounded at Antietam, and at the battle of Fredericksburg commanded the right grand division of the army. He was one of old Fort Winnebago's brightest jewels.

Lieut. Horatio Phillips Van Cleve went to the front early in the War of Secession as colonel of the Second Minnesota, and achieved distinction, retiring with the rank of major-general; he was one of the finest graduates of the old fort. At the battle of Stone River, Van Cleve was in command of a subdivision of the Army of the Ohio, and was severely wounded. Greeley's *History of the Americas Conflict* erroneously records him as killed. He recovered from his wounds, and served with distinction until the close of the war. Van Cleve married Charlotte Ouisconsin Clark, daughter of Maj. Nathan Clark, at Fort Winnebago in 1836, this lady having been born at Fort Crawford (Prairie du Chien) in 1819, said to be the first woman of pure white

OFFICERS AT FORT WINNEBAGO (With their rank while at the fort.)

77 blood born within the present limits of Wisconsin. Her father, the major, died at Fort Winnebago and was buried in the old military cemetery, but his remains were subsequently removed to Cincinnati.

Lieut. Randolph B. Marcy was on duty at Fort Winnebago in 1837–40; captain in 1846, and in active service during the Mexican War, later being on frontier duty for many years. During the War of Secession, he was chief-of-staff under his son-in-law, Gen. George B. McClellan, in 1861–62, attaining the rank of inspector-general and brevet brigadier-

general. General Marcy was the author of several volumes descriptive of frontier life and service.1

1 *Exploration of the Red River of Louisiana in 1852* (Washington, 1851); *The Prairie Traveler, a Handbook for Overland Emigrants* (New York, 1859); *Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border* (1866); *Border Reminiscences* (New York, 1872).— Ed.

Lieut. Nathan B. Rossell joined (1839) the Fifth Infantry at Fort Winnebago, his first post. He was with bis regiment in the Mexican War, being severely wounded at Molino del Rey. He was brevetted for distinguished services and was presented by his native state, New Jersey, with a gold sword. He was in command at Fort Albuquerque, N. Mex., when the War of Secession broke out. He was ordered into active service, being killed while in command of the Third Infantry, at Gaines's Mill.

Lieut. Edward Kirby Smith, the dashing Confederate general who kept the Union forces so busy in the Southwest during the Rebellion,was also at the Fox-Wisconsin portage even prior to the establishment of the fort. A stray manuscript leaf from some of the army records left at the fort when it was evacuated, and now in possession of one of the citizens of Portage, contains the proceedings of a court-martial whereat the brevet lieutenant was tried for insubordination, being charged with having “refused to take orders from any d—d militia captain.”

Dr. Lyman Foot, eminent as a surgeon and physician,—who spent much of his early manhood at various military posts on the frontier, and who was greatly esteemed for his 78 social qualities and professional attainments,—was long remembered by early citizens of Portage.

Lieut. John Pegram, who became a distinguished Confederate general, and lost his life in one of the engagements near Petersburg; Lieut. John T. Collinsworth, who resigned in 1836 and became inspector-general of the republic of Texas, dying in 1837 at the age of 28; Col. James S. McIntosh, who was mortally wounded at the battle of Molino

del Rey, in Mexico, in 1846; Lieut. John J. Abercrombie, who commanded the Union forces at the battle of Falling Waters, one of the first engagements in the late war; Lieut. Alexander S. Hooe, who greatly distinguished himself at the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, in the latter of which he lost an arm; Lieut. Pinkney Lugenbeel, who was brevetted for gallant and meritorious conduct in the battles of Contreras, Churubusco and Chapultepec in the Mexican War, and served in the Army of the Potomac; Lieuts. Ferdinand S. Mumford and Samuel B. Hayman, who acquired honorable distinction in the War of Secession, and undoubtedly others of merit whose names do not occur to me, were here.

Little did these young officers, as they gathered around the festive board and sang:1

1 “Benny Havens” was an army melody, very popular at our frontier posts sixty years ago. See “Grant's Appointment to West Point,” *McClure's Magazine*, January, 1897. “Benny Havens” was one of the institutions at West Point—a little tavern and bar on the riverbank, just outside of the reservation. It was considered very wild to slip down to Benny's and smoke a cigar and drink a glass of gin.

In the army there's sobriety, Promotion's very slow, We'll sigh o'er reminiscences of Benny Havens, O! Old Benny Havens, O! Old Benny Havens, O! We'll sigh o'er reminiscences of Benny Havens, O!

do more than dream of the promotion which was soon to be theirs; but the war with Mexico was near at hand, and promotion came to them very rapidly.

Among the earliest to arrive at the fort was Capt. Gideon Low, who came here with his command from Green Bay in 79 1831. In the Black Hawk War, Capt. Low was ordered to Fort Atkinson; and after the danger was over there he returned to Fort Winnebago, where he remained on duty until 1840, when he resigned. Prior to his resignation he built the Franklin House, in 1838, which became so famous as a hostelry in the early days of Portage. Capt. Low died at the agency in 1850, and was buried in the cemetery at the

fort; but subsequently his remains were removed to the burial lot of his son-in-law, Henry Merrell, in Silver Lake Cemetery.

Some of those who were not in the service directly, but who were at the fort in various capacities, and who afterward became prominent in public affairs, should be mentioned, as a history of Fort Winnebago would not be complete without recalling them.

The distinguished Hungarian political refugee, Count Agostin Haraszthy, was at the fort and had a contract with the government for supplying the garrison with fuel, his headquarters being on one of the “islands” in the marsh a few miles north of the fort. After leaving here he founded the village of Haraszthy, now called Sank City, and subsequently removed to California, where he was a man of much prominence in public affairs, being a member of the legislature of that State. Later he directed his energies to affairs in Central America and lost his life there while crossing a lagoon, being drowned, or possibly pulled under by an alligator.1

1 Col. (or Count) Agestin Haraszthy was born in 1812, in the comitat of Bacska, Hungary, his family having been prominent in Hungarian annals for upwards of 700 years. Educated in the law, he was, at the age of 18, a member of Emperor Ferdinand's body guard (of nobles), later being chief executive officer of his (Haraszthy's) district, and then private secretary of the Hungarian viceroy. Upon the failure of the liberal movement of 1839–40, in which he was engaged, he was compelled to fly to the United States. After extensive travels over our country, he wrote a book (in Hungarian) intended to encourage his fellow countrymen to emigrate to America. In 1840–41 he settled in Wisconsin, near Portage, as related by Mr. Turner in the above text; here he had a large tract of [land, which he improved at much cost, making necessary roads and ferries. Gaining permission to return temporarily to Hungary, to surrender certain important State papers to that government, he succeeded in saving $150,000 from his confiscated estates, together with a considerable amount of family plate and paintings. With this fortune, he returned to Wisconsin (1842–43), and founded what is now Sauk City, where he planted the first hop-yard in our State,

and encouraged others to do likewise; he was highly successful with this crop. He became the head of an emigrant association which brought to Wisconsin large and successful colonies of English, German, and Swiss. In 1848, he made considerable contributions of arms, supplies, and money to his revolutionary compatriots in Hungary. The following year (1849)he removed to California, being elected sheriff of San Diego county. He was for many years a prominent citizen of that State, holding important State and national offices. He is called the Father of Viniculture in California, and published much on that subject —in 1861 being appointed by the governor as special commissioner to visit European vineyards and report thereon; the result of his report was the introduction of 400 distinct varieties of grapes into the Golden State. In 1868, he went to Nicaragua, where, at the head of a company of friends, he obtained valuable privileges for the manufacture of wines and spirits, sugar, and lumber—acquiring 100,000 acres of some of the best land in Central America. It was upon his plantation, the Hacienda San Antonio, near the port of Corinto, that he met his death (July 6, 1870), as stated above by Mr. Turner.

When Haraszthy returned to America in 1812–43, he was accompanied by his mother, who died at Grand Gulf, Miss., 1844–45; and his father (Charles), who, at the age of 80, was buried at sea on his return to San Francisco from Corinto (July 22, 1870). Colonel Haraszthy's wife (née Elconora Dödinsky) died at Leon, Nicaragua, July 15, 1869; his son, Col. Gaza Haraszthy, died on the family plantation in Nicaragua, December : 17, 1878, aged 45; his sons Attila F. and Arpad were born in Hungary and now (1898) live in California; another surviving son (Beba) was born in Sauk City, Wis.; of his two daughters, Ida was born in Peoria, Ill., and Otelia in Madison, Wis.— Ed.

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Of those who were at the Fox-Wisconsin portage in early times, years before the fort had an existence, was Pierre Paquette. He was born at St. Louis in 1796, and married Thérèse Crelie, daughter of the noted Joseph Crelie.2 His early manhood was spent among the Indians in the Far West, in the fur trade. Subsequently he became the agent

of the American Fur Company at the portage, and was the agent of Joseph Rolette in the transportation business. He was slain by an Indian named Mauzamoneka (or Iron

For accounts of Crelie, see *Wis. Hist. Colls*., iii, vii, viii, ix.— Ed.

81 Walker), in 1836, with whom he had had some trouble, at a spot near the present site of the Catholic church in Portage. He was one of the best known men in the West, and his tragic death produced a sensation equal to what might be experienced if the most distinguished man in Wisconsin to-day should be assassinated; for he was a famous man in many ways, and was held in the highest esteem by both whites and Indians. For years after his death he was the most talked-about man in this section. At the time of his death he was living across the river, where Judge Barden now resides, and some of the latter's farm buildings were erected by Paquette. His daughter, Thérèse, who is still living, and a resident of Caledonia, speaks of frequent visits to her father's place by Lieutenant Jefferson Davis and Captain Gideon Low.

Sutterlee Clark in writing of him says: “He was the very best specimen of a man I ever saw. He was 6 feet 2 inches in height and weighed 200 pounds, hardly ever varying a single pound. He was a very handsome man, hospitable, generous and kind, and I think I never saw a better natured man.”1

1 *Wis. Hist. Colls*., viii, p. 316.— — Ed.

Henry Merrell said of him: “He was a man of mild disposition, could neither read nor write, but had as true a sense of honor as any gentleman I ever knew, and all who knew him would take his word as soon as any man's bond.”2 Most fabulous stories were often related of his remarkable strength.

2 *Wis. Hist. Colls*., vii, p. 383.— Ed.

Paquette was buried under the old log church which stood in about the center of what is now Adams street, near its junction with Conant street. The church was burned about

1840, and his resting place was marked by a picket enclosure, after which his remains were removed to the lot in the rear of the present Baptist church, and were buried under the entrance to the “L” in the rear of it;3 6

3 The church spoken of was the first church in Central Wisconsin, and was built by Paquette for a Dominican priest, Rev. Samuel Mazzuchelli, who came here Occasionally to hold services among the Indians and halfbreeds, and who in time became distinguished in his order, having founded Saint Clara Academy at Sinsinawa Mound, in Grant county.— A. J. T.

Cf, Moses Paquette's reference to the church built by Pierre Paquette, *Wis. Hist. Colls*., xii, pp. 432, 433.— Ed.

82

Another noted character hereabouts was Jean Baptiste Du Bay; whose trading post was on the hill opposite the fort and just east of the Indian Agency, having succeeded to the interest of Paquette, after the latter's death. He killed William S. Reynolds on the premises in 1857, during a land-title dispute, an event that attracted great interest at the time and which ever after clouded an otherwise honorable career.1

1 *Wis. Hist. Colls*., vii, pp. 400–402.— Ed.

Henry Merrell was at the fort also; he was a suffer there in 1834, and afterwards became the agent of the American Fur Company, filling many positions of honor and trust; he was the first senator from this district when the State was organized, and his descendants have converted the site of the old military fort from its warlike appearance to the more peaceful one of a well-appointed farm.2

2 See Merrell's “Pioneer Life in Wisconsin,” *Wis. Hist. Colls*., vii, pp. 366–402.— Ed.

So also Satterlee Clark, who was appointed a sutler by President Jackson in 1830; but being a minor he was unable to take charge of the position in his own name, and it was farmed out to Oliver Newbury of Detroit, Clark becoming his clerk. He devoted the most of his time, however, to the Indian trade. Clark was for many years a senator from Dodge county. He was an admirer of Jefferson Davis, and never suffered an opportunity to pass to sound his praises@ even during the most exciting days of the War of Secession. So conspicuous was this habit, that he often found himself in controversy with others who were not in sympathy with him. On one occasion, when it fell to me to introduce him to a public assemblage in Portage, to lecture on early times at the fort, I remarked in a spirit of pleasantry: “Our friend who will address you to-night was a companion of Lieutenant Davis at the fort, and it is now impossible

SOME OF FORT WINNEBAGO'S CELEBRITIES (With their rank while at the fort.)

83 to say whether ‘Sat’ imbibed his secession ideas from ‘Jeff,’ or whether ‘Jeff’ obtained his from ‘Sat,’” all of which was received by Clark with his accustomed good-nature. With all of his peculiarities, and often extravagant expressions of speech, he was a most companionable man, and a true courtier to ladies, who admired him.1 Clark was married at the old Indian Agency house on the hill just opposite the fort, and still standing, to a daughter of Mr. Jones, the sutler. And here it should be stated that this house was built for John H. Kinzie, the sub-Indian agent, who was a son of John Kinzie, whose name occupies so prominent a page in the early history of Chicago, he being a post-trader at Fort Dearborn at the time of the massacre of the garrison by the Indians in 1812.2

1 See his “Early Times at Fort Winnebago,” *Wis. Hist. Colls*., viii, pp. 309–321.— Ed.

2 Mrs. John H. Kinzie was the author of that entertaining volume of remimiscenses of life at frontier posts, *Wau-Bun*. From this book (ch. viii), I transcribe her account of her arrival at Fort Winnebago in 1830, in company with her husband, who was to have charge of the Indian Agency. Mrs. Twiggs was the only woman who had preceded her to the fort. After

describing the approach to the fort in a canoe, by the tortuous windings of the Fox, Mrs. Kinzie writes:

“Maj. and Mrs. Twiggs and a few of the younger officers (for nearly all the older ones were absent), with our brother Robert, or as he is called throughout all the Indian tribes, ‘Bob,’ gave us a cordial welcome—how cordial those alone can know who have come, like us, to a remote isolated horne in the wilderness. The major insisted on our taking possession at once of vacant quarters in the fort instead of the agency, as had been proposed. No, we must be under the same roof with them. Mrs. Twiggs had been without a companion of her own sex for more than four months, and would certainly not hear of a separation now. But we must be their guests until the arrival of the boats containing our furniture, which, under the care of our old acquaintance, Hamilton Arndt, was making its way slowly up from Green Bay. A dinner had been prepared for us. This is one of the advantages of the zig-zag approach by the Fox river—traders never take their friends by surprise; and when the whole circle sat down to the hospitable board we were indeed a merry company. After dinner, Mrs. Twiggs showed me the quarters assigned to us on the opposite side of the hall. They consisted of two large rooms on each side of the building. On the ground floor the front room was vacant. The one in the rear was to be the sleeping apartment, as was evident from a huge, unwieldy bedstead of proportions amply sufficient to have accommodated Og, the King of Bashan, with Mrs. Og and the children into the bargain. This edifice had been built under the immediate superintendence of one of our young lieutenants [Jefferson Davis] and it was plain to be seen that both he and the soldiers who fabricated it had exhausted all their architectural skill. The timber of which it was composed had been grooved and carved. the pillars that supported the front swelled in and out in a most fanciful manner; the doors were not only paneled, but radiated in a way to excite the admiration of all unsophisticated eyes. A similar piece of workmanship had been erected in each set of quarters, to supply the deficiency of closets, an inconvenience which had never occurred, until too late, to the bachelors who planned them. The three apartments of which each structure was composed were unquestionably designed for

clothes-press, storeroom, and china closet; such at least were the uses to which Mrs. Twiggs had appropriated the one assigned to her. There was this slight difficulty, that in the latter the shelves were too close to admit setting in even a gravyboat, but they made up in number what was wanting in space. We christened the whole affair in honor of its projector, a ‘Davis,’ thus placing the first laurel on the brow of one who was afterward to signalize himself in cabinet making of quite a different character.”

It will be remembered that Davis himself was a member of President Pierce's cabinet, and that he constructed an entire one on his own account as president of the Confederate States.

84 John H. Kinzie died on a Fort Wayne Railway train January 28, 1865, of heart disease.

When the Kinzies arrived at the fort, they found the Winnebagoes assembled there in anticipation of the arrival of Shawneeawkee (the Indian name for the agent), who was to pay them their annuities. “The woods were now brilliant with many tints of autumn,” Mrs. Kinzie wrote, "and the scene around us was further enlivened by groups of Indians in all directions, and their lodges which were scattered here and there in the vicinity of the Agency buildings. On the low grounds might be seen the white tents of the traders, already prepared to send out winter supplies to the Indians, in exchange for the annuity money they were about to receive.

“Preparatory to this event, the great chief of the Winnebago nation, ‘Four Legs’ (Hootschope), whose village was on Doty's Island at the foot of Lake Winnebago, had 85 thought proper to take a little carouse, as is too apt to be the custom when the savages come into the neighborhood of a sutler's establishment. In the present instance, the facilities for a season of intoxication had been augmented by the presence on the ground of some traders, too regardless of the very stringent laws prohibiting the sale of liquor to Indians.

“Poor Four Legs could not stand this full tide of prosperity. Unchecked by the presence of his father, the agent, he carried his indulgence to such excess that he fell a victim in the course of a few days. His funeral had been celebrated with unusual pomp the day before our arrival, and great was my disappointment at finding myself too late to witness all the ceremonies.

“His body, according to their custom, having been wrapped in a blanket and placed in a rude coffin along with his guns, tomahawk, pipes, and a quantity of tobacco, had been carried to the most elevated point of the hill opposite the fort, followed by an immense procession of his people, whooping, beating their drums, howling and making altogether what is emphatically termed a ‘pow-wow.’

“After the interment of his body a stake was planted at his head, on which was painted in vermillion a series of hieroglyphics, descriptive of the great deeds and events of his life. The whole was then surrounded with pickets of the trunks of the tamarack trees, and thither the friends would come for many successive days to renew the expression of their grief, and to throw over the grave tobacco and other offerings to the Great Spirit.”

We might imagine that the bones of the great Four Legs repose there still, a little in the rear of the Agency building; but they probably do not, for the graves of the Indians were usually very shallow, and the tiller of the soil, as he “drove his team a-field,” would often turn their bones to the surface to be whitened in the sun; and it became in after years quite fashionable for white men to desecrate the Indian graves in pursuit of relics. Frequently 86 no other covering than a roof of slabs, in the form of a [???] was given to them. The removal of a board would enable one to see the old Indian chief Choukeka or “Spoon Dekorra” sitting upright, with all of his funeral trappings surrounding him.1 On one occasion, when two of our townsmen, prompted by the spirit of an overweening curiosity, made an inspection of Dekorra's rude mausoleum, to see how the old fellow was getting on, a rabbit was observed keeping vigil with the spirit of the old chieftain.

1 Not to be confounded with the Spoon Decorah of the next generation, whose narrative is given in *Wis. Hist. Colls*, xiii, pp. 448–462.— Ed.

Continuing her narrative of events occurring at the fort immediately after their arrival, Mrs. Kinzie relates the “calls” they received from the principal chiefs, who had put on their best blankets, gaudiest feathers, and paint to receive their new “mother.”

There was Nawkaw or Carrymaunee (The Walking Turtle), who, the principal chief of his tribe, was beside Tecumseh when he fell at the battle of the Thames, and old “Daykauray,”—Schchipkaka (White War Eagle), as Mrs. Kinzie spells it, but which is always written, locally, “Dekorra.”2

2 The correct orthography undoubtedly is De Carrie, like that of his father the old chief, who was the reputed grandson of Sebrevoir De Carrie, an officer in the French army, who, after resigning his commission in 1729, became an Indian trader among the Winnebagoes, subsequently taking for his wife the head chief's sister, Morning Glory, spoken of as a most remarkable woman. De Carrie returned to the army and was mortally wounded at Quebec, April 28, 1760, and died of his wounds in a hospital at Montreal. Whether this genealogical tree has been correctly established or not. I will not undertake to determine. It is vouched for in Augustin Grignon's Recollections (*Wis. Hist. Colls*., iii), and by John T. de la Ronde (*Id*., vii), who was something of an expert in Indian genealogy; and so let it be accepted as a fact. There certainly are some corroborating and extenuating circumstances to sustain it.

Mrs. Kinzie spoke of her caller as “the most noble, dignified and venerable of his own, or indeed of any tribe. His fine Roman countenance, rendered still more striking by his bald head, with one solitary tuft of long silvery hair neatly tied and falling back on his shoulders; his perfectly 87 neat, appropriate dress, almost without ornament, and his courteous demeanor, never laid aside under any circumstaces, all combining to give him the highest place in the consideration of all who knew him. It will hereafter be seen,” Mrs. Kinzie

adds, “that his traits of character were not less grand and striking than were his personal appearance and deportment.”

Mrs. Kinzie probably had in mind, when she penned the following paragraph, the time when the Indians were reduced to dire extremities for food. The game had been driven off by the troops and war parties the preceding summer, and soup made of slippery elm and stewed acorns was the only food that many of them had subsisted upon for weeks. Their condition was wretched in the extreme, and could only be relieved by the arrival of the stores that were expected to come up Fox River by the boat. While this condition of affairs existed, Mrs. Kinzie wrote: “The noble old De-kau-ry came one day from the Barribault [Baraboo] to apprise us of the state in his village. More than forty of his people he said had now been for many days without food, save bark and roots. My husband accompanied him to the commanding officer to tell his story and ascertain if any amount of food could be obtained from that quarter. The result was the promise of a small allowance of flour, sufficient to alleviate the cravings of his own family. When this was explained to the chief, he turned away. ‘No,’ he said, ‘if my people could not be relieved, I and my family will starve with them.’ And he refused, for those nearest and dearest to him, the proffered succor, until all could share alike. When at last the boat arrived, the scene of exultation that followed was a memorable one. The bulky ‘Wild Cat,’ now greatly reduced in flesh from his long fasting, seized the aristocratic ‘Washington, Woman,’ Madame Thunder, and hugged and danced with her in exuberance of their joy.”

The old chief died in 1836, at what is known locally as Caffrey's Place, at the foot of the bluff in Caledonia, and was buried in Portage just in the rear of the old log Catholic 88 church, nearly opposite J. E. Wells's residence, according to John T. de la Ronde; but Moses Paquette, in the *Wisconsin Historical Collections* (vol. xiii), states that his death occurred at the Pete-en-Well on the Wisconsin River. When the order was made to remove the bodies of all persons buried there, Dekaury's remains were bundled into some boxes promiscuously with others, and they now rest in the Catholic cemetery.

Among the Kinzies' other callers were Black Wolf, Talk English, Little Elk, Wild Cat, White Crow, and Dandy,—a nephew of Four Legs, but not the Dandy known to so many of the housewives of Portage, who was omnipresent when pressed with hunger. His pretensions to noble lineage were distinctly repudiated by Yellow Thunder, who regarded his ancestry as tainted with uncertainty. Each of these distinguished callers could point to some special deed or traits of character that elevated him above the common herd, who could not point to so many scalps on their belts, or exhibit other evidences of prowess and greatness.

Among other callers, a little later, was the esteemed Mme. Yellow Thunder, who had been to Washington with Mr. Thunder, and was known by the other Indians as the “Washington Woman.” Yellow Thunder had a reputation not a whit less honorable than Dekorra's. The good deeds related of him would fill a volume. His remains repose undisturbed on the west bank of Wisconsin River, a few miles below Kilbourn, where he lived and died, emulating, as well as he could, the virtues of his pale-faced brethren and eschewing their vices. At one time the government at Washington decided to remove him, with the rest of the tribe, to the Winnebago reservation near Omaha, and they did; but the old fellow got back even before the guard who escorted them thither, for he had decided to live in Wisconsin.1 He purchased a farm and became a tiller of the soil, swore allegiance to the government to which he had no occasion to feel grateful, and died at a great age in 1874.

1 See *Wis. Hist. Colls*., xii, pp. 407 et seq.— Ed.

89

The soldiers, apart from their garrison duties, were detailed to road-making. The old military highway between Fort Crawford (at Prairie du Chien) and Fort Howard (at Green Bay) was constructed wholly by them, and is still in use. Between times, some of the officers found time to go on the chase for deer in the neighboring forest. An old Indian named Dixon, whose erect form is still frequently seen on Portage streets, loves to tell how he used to paddle a canoe on Swan Lake and in the rice fields. for “two good officers” (meaning soldiers of rank) to shoot ducks. He does not remember their names,

but one of them had an unusually red head, he assures you, and was always successful in his ducking expeditions. This was probably Lieut. Carter L. Stevenson, who enjoyed the distinction of having a very bright capillary adornment.

So, while old Fort Winnebago's history has not been distinguished by attacks, or massacres, or other stirring scenes, it has not been wholly uneventful.

During the Black Hawk War, which followed the suppression of the Winnebago outbreak, the garrison at the fort was assigned to more active duty. A portion of it was sent to Fort Atkinson to strengthen that post, under command of Captain Low. What remained was so meager as to invite an attack from the Winnebagoes, of whose good intentions the inmates were not well assured. The approach of Black Hawk, in 1882, was heralded, and consternation prevailed. Satterlee Clark, in his reminiscences, states: “In the meantime Black Hawk, learning from the Winnebagoes, who also promised to assist him, that only thirty men remained in Fort Winnebago, determined burn it and massacre its inmates. They accordingly came and camped on the Fox river about four miles above Swan Lake, and about eight miles from the fort.” Clark probably meant Winnebagoes instead of Sacs, as some have inferred from his statement; for Black Hawk did not reach Columbia county. He detoured to the south with his braves, and was attacked and put to flight at what is known as the battle of Wisconsin Heights, in the town of Roxbury, in 90 Dane county, a short distance south of the town of West Point. Some amusing episodes occurred while the attack was in expectancy, but no serious catastrophe resulted.

Mrs. Van Cleve, in writing1 of her marriage and other occurrences at the fort, has recorded this incident: “During the following summer [1886] a detachment of troops in command of Col. Zachary Taylor, accompanied by General Brady, came up to Fort Winnebago in consequence of an Indian scare, which was entirely imaginary, and camped on the prairie, just outside the fort. Their coming was a very pleasant event, and the more so because there was not, and never had been, any danger from the Indians, who were very peaceable neighbors. But we enjoyed the visit exceedingly, and the officers

were frequently entertained at our quarters, at their meals. Very opportunely for us, the strawberries were abundant, and the flowers, which were beautiful and fresh every morning, were more lovely as ornaments than elegant plate of silver or gold."

1 In her *Three Score Years and Ten*.— Ed.

At the conclusion of the Black Hawk War, in 1832, a treaty stipulation was entered into for the cession of all the Indian lands south and east of the Fox and Wisconsin rivers. One of the stipulations of the treaty was the surrender of certain individuals of their tribe, accused of having participated with the Sacs in some murders. The men were surrendered, according to agreement, and were confined in the "black-hole." as it was called, being an enormous dungeon under one of the fort buildings, to await trial. Although careful supervision was exercised, the Indians proceeded to plan their escape, and in about six weeks they had tunneled their way out under the walls in almost the precise manner that a number of Union officers made their escape from Libby prison thirty years later. That they might be as little encumbered as possible in their flight, they left their blankets behind them; and although it was bitter December weather, they took to the woods and prairies with only their calico shirts and leggins for 91 covering. The question among the officers of the fort was, how to get the fugitives back. Kinzie, the agent, could promise no more than that he would communicate with the chiefs and represent the wishes of the officers that the prisoners should once more surrender themselves, and thus free those who had the charge of them from the imputation of carelessness, which the government would be very likely to throw upon them. When, therefore, according to their custom, the Winnebago chiefs assembled at the agency on New Year's day, 1833, the agent laid the subject before them. The Indians replied that if they saw the young men they would tell them what the officers would like to have them do. They could themselves do nothing in the matter. They had fulfilled their engagement by bringing them once, and putting them in the hands of the officers. The government had them in its power once, and could not keep them; it must now go and catch them.

The social amenities of life were not neglected in the least degree by the few ladies who gave grace by their refining presence to fort life. Calls were made and returned then as now, and a lady took her position in a canoe to make or return a call on an acquaintance, —at Fort Crawford down the Wisconsin, 118 miles distant, or down the Fox to Fort Howard, about 175 miles away,—with less ado and trouble in arranging her toilet for the occasion, than is sometimes experienced by our ladies of to-day in making a party call across the street. I have frequently heard gentleman who was accustomed to escort ladies on Such occasions, and paddle the canoe, and who made his bridal tour in that manner from the old Agency house to Green Bay, speak of the rare delight of these trips in a birchen canoe.

The venerable W. W. Haskin, who is spending the evening of his life at Pardeeville,—one of the very few survivors of those who were at the fort when it was garrisoned,—reverts with evident pleasure to an occasion when he chaperoned some ladies at the fort on some of their horseback 92 gallopings in the oak openings about Stone Quarry Hill; and Mrs. Kinzie, a delicate young lady, and a stranger to life beyond the frontier, has told us most entertainingly in her *Wau-Bun* , of her trips to Green Bay by boat, and of her. gallops to and from Chicago, sometimes in mid-winter, following bridle paths through the forest, fording swollen streams (for of bridges there were none), riding across. treacherous marshes and through swamps, braving storms and inclement weather, partaking of Indian diet in their lodges at times, and subsisting as best she might, and remembering it all as a pleasant part of life.

Miss Marcy, daughter of Lieutenant Marcy (she later became the wife of Gem George B. McClellan), gave the garrison a joy with her childish antics, and I have heard habitués of the fort refer with pride to the times when they dandled the dear little miss on their knees. The voice of Major Twiggs's daughter, Lizzie, first resounded in the fort in January, 1881, and so she is entitled to the distinction, as I suppose, of being the first white person born within the present limits of Columbia county.1

1 She died at the age of five, in Washington, D. C.

Mrs. Van Cleve has written: “The memory of the weekly musicals at John Kinzie's pleasant agency, and the delightful rides on horseback over the portage to the point where Portage City now stands, quickens my heart even now.” As Mrs. Van Cleve (then Charlotte Ouisconsin Clark) was shortly afterward married to Lieutenant Van Cleve, it is not difficult to guess who her escort was on these occasions. It is recorded that the ladies, ever foremost in good works, had a Sunday school in progress at the chapel, and let feel well assured the lessons they taught were fruitful of good results.

Neither was education, temporal or spiritual, neglected, as we learn from W. C. Whitford's paper on “Early History of Education in Wisconsin”2 that Maj. John Green, commanding

2 *Wis. Iiist. Colls*., v, p. 331. The latest history of the subject Stearns's *Columbian History of Education in Wisconsin* (Milw.,1893).— Ed.

Indian Agency House, Fort Winnebago . Formerly occupied by Mrs. John H. Kinzie, author of *Wau-Bun* , and now the farm house of E. S. Baker.

93 officer at Fort Winnebago, engaged, in 1835, Miss Eliza Haight as governess in his family; he allowed the children of other officers at the fort to attend the school. There were in all about a dozen pupils. In the spring of 1840, Rev. S. P. Keyes became both chaplain and schoolmaster of the fort, and taught about twenty children, some of them over twelve years of age.

In the spring of 1833 the garrison was excited over the arrival of a clergyman, the Rev. Aratus Kent, of Galena, who was accompanied by his wife. “This event,” Mrs. Kinzie wrote, “is memorable as being the first occasion on which the gospel, according to the Protestant faith, was preached at Fort Winnebago. The large parlor of the hospital was fitted up for the service, and gladly did we say to each other: ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord!’ For nearly three years had we lived here Without the blessing of a public service of praise

and thanksgiving. We regarded this commencement as an omen of better times, and our little ‘sewing society’ worked with renewed industry to raise fund which might be available hereafter in securing the permanent services of a missionary.”1

1 *Wau-Bun*,ch. XIV.— Ed.

The efforts of the ladies in their religious work were some times turned in the direction of the Indians. Explaining the nature of their efforts to our old friend Dandy, he sponded: “That is right; I am glad to see you doing your duty; I am very religious myself and I like to see others so. I always take care that my squaws attend to their duties, not reading, perhaps, but such as the Great Spirit liked, and such as I think proper and becoming.”

The chapel, after the evacuation of the fort, continued to be used as such, and the late Rev. William Wells and the late Rev. Isaac Smith were accustomed to officiate there. The building is now one of the farm buildings on the Helmann farm, a little east of the old fort.

The spirit of speculation was also abroad, and army officers and their thrifty friends invested in government lands, and laid out on paper many a promising village. One of 94 these embraced a considerable tract of land adjoining the military reserve on the east, fronting in part on Swan Lake and extending back to Stone Quarry Hill, to which given the pretentious name of “Wisconsinapolis.' When the capital of the State was being located, the embryo city received six affirmative votes, to seven in the negative. This proposition has been thought by some, unacquainted with its natural advantages, to have been a preposterous one; as a matter of fact it was a most eligible and appropriate location for the capital. Another village, called ”Ida, “ occupies the precise spot on Swan Lake, platted last year as Oakwood, which promises to become a popular resort. Another one on the south side of Swan Lake was called ”Winnebago City,“ but better known in the east as ”Swan Lake City,“ and now much better known as “Wardle's Farm.”

While the officers hunted and fished, and speculated in wild lands and city lots by day, and indulged in games festivities and theatricals at night, and the ladies knit and crocheted and

did bead work and conducted Sabbath schools, and attended to their household duties as well as they could with their surroundings, the soldiers stood sentry, and between times visited the sutler's stores and trading posts, and made merry generally by day and sang “Benny Havens, O!” by night. In brief, army life at Fort Winnebago was very much like army life elsewhere. Athletics and theatricals, games and races, relieved the tedium; and discipline and demoralization, vice and virtue went hand. 1

1 The celebrated English writer, Frederick Marryat, journeyed through Wisconsin in 1837, and in his *Diary in America* (London, 1839, 9. vols.), vol. 1, p. 191, records his visit to Fort Winnebago: “Fort Winnebago situated between the Fox and Wisconsin rivers at the portage, the rivers being about a mite and a half apart, the Fox river running east, and giving its waters to lake Michigan at Green Bay, while the Wisconsin turns to the west and runs into the Mississippi at Prairie du Chien. The fort is merely a square of barracks, connected together with palisades, to protect it from the Indians, and it is hardly sufficiently strong even for purpose. It is beautifully situated, and when the country fills up will come a place of importance. Most of the officers are married and live a very quiet and secluded but not unpleasant life. I stayed there two days, much pleased with the society, and the kindness shown to me; but an opportunity of descending the Wisconsin to Prairie du Chien, in a keel boat, having presented itself, I availed myself of an invitation to join the party, instead of proceeding by land to Galena, as had been my original intention.”

The old fort, however, like all earthly things, had its day. The approaching war with Mexico had reached its threatening stage; and preparatory for it, orders for the evacuation were issued in 1845, the troops being sent to St. Louis to relieve those stationed at Jefferson Barracks, who had been ordered to the Gulf, and a little later they followed them to the sanguinary fields of Mexico. When the evacuation took place, the fort was left in charge of Sergeant Van Camp; but he died shortly after, when Capt. William Weir was placed in charge, he having been a soldier in the Florida War and afterward at the fort. Later, he was a soldier in the War of Secession. In 1853, the property was sold under the direction of

Jefferson Davis, then secretary of war, who, as lieutenant in the army twenty-three years before, had assisted in the construction of the fort.1 Prior

1 The following is a copy of a letter from the secretary of war to the president, regarding the reservation at Fort Winnebago:

War Department, Washington, July 36, 1851.—Sir: By an order made or before the 28th day of February and written upon a plat of the public lands adjacent to Fort Winnebago, the President directed that (among others) section 4 in township 12 north, and section 33 in township 13 north, range 9 east, be reserved for military purposes. At the time this order was made these sections had not been laid out in full, they were, as will appear by a copy of the plat bearing the president's order herewith marked D, situated on the western limit of the public domain and portions of them, if the lines had been run out, would have fallen within the country then belonging to an Indian tribe. The unsurveyed portions were, however, occupied for public purposes, and buildings were erected and one still standing thereon. By a treaty made in 1848 the Indians have ceded their land in that vicinity to the United States, and when it is surveyed and the lines of sections 4 and 33 completed, the portions of those sections lying within the newly acquired territory will be designated as fractional sections 4 and 33 lying west, etc., etc.

I am now advised by the commissioner of the general land office, in a letter herewith marked E, that agreeably to the understanding of his office the executive order as it now stands will not embrace these fractions; “but they will be subject to the operations of the general pre-emption law as other public lands as soon as they shall be surveyed, unless the President acting under advices to be given to that effect by the war department, shall deem it proper to add those portions to the existing reserve made for the use of the fort by President Jackson and in advance of the time of the survey of the same when the pre-emption right can legally attach to them.”

Although I think it doubtful under the circumstances whether a preemption right could legally attach to these lands, embraced as they are by the terms of the President's order

and actually occupied under it, yet to obviate any difficulty I deem it best to pursue the course suggested by the commissioner of the general land office and recommend that “the tract of land which when surveyed will be denominated fractional section 33 lying west of Fox river in township 13 north of range 9 east” and “fraction of section 4 lying west of claim No. 21 of A. Grignon in township 12 north, range 9 east,” adjacent to Fort Winnebago, Wisconsin, be reserved from sale in fulfillment of the original order of President Jackson above cited. Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C.M. Conway, Secretary of War.

To the President—(Approve)—Approved July 29, 1851, and ordered accordingly. Millard Filmore.

96 to the sale. the board of supervisors of Columbia county, January 7, 1852, formally adopted a memorial asking congress to grant the military reserve at Fort Winnebago for the benefit of the Fox and Wisconsin river improvement. Just why there should have been a desire to donate these lands to a private company, is hard to understand. If Congress had been asked to donate the reservation to the State, very likely it would have been done, as it is the practice of late years to donate abandoned military reservations to the States in which they are situated, for public purposes. It can only be regretted now that it had not been done in this instance. If it had been, the most important results might have followed.

It has been a matter of regret, often expressed, that the old fort should have been allowed to go to decay.1 It certainly is to be regretted that the historic old spot could

1 A destructive fire occurred in the officers' quarters, March 30, 1856, destroying one of the principal sections of the fort.

The Fox-Wisconsin Portage , 1839. Reduced facsimile of map made by Capt. Thomas Jefferson Cram, T. E., January, 1840, and now in archives of War Department, Washington. Survey made October 2, 1839, by Lieut. Webster, under direction of Captain

Cram. The line from A to B, represents the route of the proposed government canal; the double line, is the old portage trail.

97 not have been donated to the State, but there was no reason why the fort should have been maintained. All occasion for it had passed forever, and in the natural order of events the buildings went to decay. H.D. Bath, editor of the Columbus *Democrat* , visited it in 1871, and gave his impressions of it as it then appeared, in an article published at the time: “Duration and desuetude have been busy upon it. Most of the buildings stand, but they are sadly dismantled and decayed. One of the small yet massive blockhouses was burned simultaneously with the line of buildings forming the end of the quadrangle just within the defenses. The other remains, but it has been prostituted to bovine purposes. A domestic quadruped of that species shelters herself from the nightly attacks of the weather, in the strong inclosure built for refuge from the fury of the savage. On several of the edifices used for officers' quarters and similar accommodations, the massy roofing has descended almost to the ground, and barely depends, in crumpled decay, over the faces of the buildings, as when dilapidation seizes upon human ruins obtruding the tatters into their very eyes. The timbers were all of the best pine. The weather, however, if a slow hewer, is one that never rests and they must soon come down. The battered well with its forty feet of depth, and its never-failing waters, remains in the center of the square, and answers the purpose. Yet the roofed curb and heavy roller, worn with much yielding of pure refreshment, appear about to make a grave of the shaft beneath it, and is in a condition to improvise a tomb for any drawer of water that gives it a call. The magazine wards off the worm as only stone can. Its safe interior has been transmitted into a boudoir for a new-milch cow. The stone bakery is also in a good state of preservation; what use poverty, which makes men burrow wherever they can, has put this to, we did not observe. The only human figure to be discerned about the premises was a red-shirred Celt, pantalooned in what might be the cast-off undress of some former commandant long since gone to glory, and the child he carried in his arms, though there were flitting in 7 98 one of the better-preserved buildings, evidences of further family, present and future. He and his brood are the only life now in these former haunts. once so full of frontier life

and military animation. The outward walls are littered with posters, ruptured with winds and rains, and placarded with the names of firms telling you where to purchase watches, or adjuring you to buy some nostrum incompatible with debility or death. Silence and abandonment, two owls ancient and voiceless, brood over the place. Existence passes it, but seldom stops. Its early origin and associations attract you thither; then curiosity melts with sadness at its desolation, and you turn from the ruin with no care to visit it again."

The old ruins, however, so graphically described, have at last passed away. Fires destroyed some of them and the balance were razed by purchasers who have converted their timbers into barns and stables. The old commissary building, and a portion of the surgeon's quarters and of the hospital, still remain. Much of the land embraced within the reservation now comprises the stock farm of Mertell & Hainsworth, while the Merrell residence occupies the old fort premises. The well continues to do duty as of yore, and the stump of the old flag-staff is still pointed out to visitors. Lieutenant Davis, in speaking of his career at the fort, once remarked to a former Portage lady, who met him at his home in Beauvoir, Miss., that to procure this staff was a matter of considerable anxiety to him. No timber entirely suitable for the purpose; could be found near the fort. Two men, who had been consulted, informed them that the stick must be at least sixty feet in length, tapering gradually to a point, and so free from defects that it would sway gracefully when the flag was given to the breeze; and they were bargained with to bring such a one to the fort.

The fixtures and furniture left at the fort when it was evacuated, were disposed of at auction or carried away at will, and many a family in the vicinage can boast of some old fort relic; the famous "Davises" could have been found 99 in the inventories of the household effects of some families, and they may be in existence somewhere yet, for aught I know. An old sideboard that was in service at the Agency, presumably Mrs. Kinzie's, is one of the treasures in James Collins's household; and a bureau and sideboard, which constituted a part of the furniture in one of the officer's quarters, is in

possession of Mrs. O. P. Williams; as is also the old carved Wooden eagle that was perched over the main entrance.

As a necessary adjunct to the fort, a cemetery was established. It was not largely populated from the garrison, and the graves of none of the soldiers who died there during its occupancy are marked by stones. Major Clark and Captain Low were buried there;but, as already stated, their remains were finally removed to family grounds elsewhere. Robert Irwin, Jr., the Indian agent, died there July, 1833. Sergt. William Weir and Private Henry Carpenter were buried there in after years, and their final resting places are appropriately marked.1 The cemetery seems to have been made general for the public for a period, and not a few of the families of citizens, more or less prominent, were buried there; but finally the national authorities took it directly in charge and built a substantial fence around it, and restricted its use to the military. Burials there in the future must be very few indeed; but it should be the duty of the national government to care for it more befittingly in the future.

1 The grave of one of the veterans of the Revolution, who was buried there, is discernible, the stone marking it bearing this inscription: COOPER PIXLEY [???] Died | Mar. 12, 1855 | Æ 86 y., 7 m., 26 D. | Soldier of the Revolution.

The surrender of Red Bird and his accomplices in the Gagnier murder, heretofore referred to, may be said to have marked the close of the Winnebago War (1827). While the troops were in pursuit of the murderers, the old Indian chief, Dekaury, was seized as a hostage for the surrender of Red Bird, although he was charged with no offense 100 himself. He was informed that if the offenders were not given up within a certain time, he would be executed himself. A messenger was sent out to inform the tribe of the situation, but no tidings came, and the time had nearly expired. Being in poor health, the old chief asked permission to go to the river and bathe, as he long had been accustomed to do. He was informed by Colonel Josiah Shelling that if he would promise, upon the honor of a chief, that he would not leave, he might have his liberty until his time had expired; whereupon he gave his hand to the colonel and promised that he would not leave; then he raised both

hands aloft, and in the most solemn manner promised that he would not go beyond the limits accorded to him, saying that if he had a hundred lives he would rather lose them all than forfeit his word. He was set at liberty, and was advised to make his escape, for there was no desire to shoot the old fellow, who had been guilty of no wrong himself. “No! Do you think I prize life above honor?” was his only reply. Nine of the ten days allotted to him had passed, and regularly at sunset of every day Dekaury reported to the colonel; but nothing was heard from the murderers. On the last day, General Henry Atkinson arrived with his troops, and the order for his execution was countermanded.

After the murder of Gagnier, Red Bird and the other Indians implicated in the affair, fled up the Wisconsin River, and a mounted force to operate against the Winnebagoes as a body scoured both sides of the river up to Portage. Maj. William Whistler, who was in command at Fort Howard (Green Bay), had been ordered by General Atkinson to go up the Fox to the portage, with any force at his disposal. A company of Oneida and Stockbridge Indians accompanied Whistler's troops, and were encamped on the bluff opposite the portage where Fort Winnebago was subsequently built, to await the arrival of the general. In the meantime, the Winnebagoes to the number of several hundred. were encamped on the ridge along where Cook street now runs, west of the Catholic church. 101 The Winnebagoes had heard of Atkinson's approach and Col. Henry Dodge's pursuit, before they were known to Whistler, and in a few days a great stir was discovered among the Indians. A party of thirty warriors was observed, by the aid of a field glass, on an eminence in the distance. It was Red Bird and his party, coming in to surrender. The details of the surrender of Red Bird have been most graphically described by the historians or the period. I would particularly advise the reader to examine the admirable account of the affair in Colonel McKenney's “The Winnebago War of 1827,” in the *Wisconsin Historical Collections* , vol. v. The heroism of Red Bird and his friend Wekau was one of the most remarkable incidents in the annals of our Indian wars.1

1 Cf. also, general index to *Wis. Hist. Colls*., x, for miscellaneous references to surrender of Red Bird and Wekau.— Ed.

The prisoners were sent to Prairie du Chien for trial, before Judge Doty. They were convicted, but for some cause sentence was deferred. While confined, Red Bird sickened and died—committed suicide, Mrs. Kinzie says, in *Wau-Bun* , in consequence of chagrin, the ignominy of his confinement being more than his proud spirit could bear; he had expected death. The historian, William R. Smith, who came to the Territory at a very early period, and was familiar with Indian character, speaking of the affair in his *History of Wisconsin* , states: “The delay of administering justice was to the Indian a matter not comprehended; they scarcely in any instance deny an act which they have committed, and do not understand why punishment should not be immediately inflicted on the guilty. The imprisonment of the body is to them a most insufferable grievance, and they look upon the act as cowardice on the part of the whites, presuming that they dare not inflict such punishment as the crime demands.”

Red Bird's accomplices were subsequently sentenced to be hung December 26, 1828; but before that date they were pardoned by President Adams, one of the implied conditions 102 being that the Indians should cede to the government the lands the miners had already appropriated to their use. Mrs. Gagnier was compensated for the loss of her husband and the mutilation of her infant. At the treaty in Prairie du Chien, in 1829, provision was made for two sections of land to her and her two children; and the government agreed to pay her the sum of $50 per annum for fifteen years, to be deducted from the annuity of the Winnebago Indians. This was the last act in the Winnebago outbreak.